

STEVEN P. DINKIN A Path Forward

# The president's job one: Restoring trust in the United States

With just over two weeks until the presidential election, our country is on the brink. For most of us, Nov. 3 can't come soon enough.

If current projections are accurate, we will wake up on Nov. 4 to learn that a record number of citizens have voted.

Forecasts suggest that more than 150 million of us will cast ballots, a level that would dwarf the 2016 presidential election, with 139 million voters. This would represent the highest voter-turnout percentage in more than a century and a big win for democracy.

Fears of the effect of COVID-19 have prompted many states to aggressively expand voting options. Early voting — in person or by mail — is available to most voters. Already, more than 14 million general election ballots have been cast.

The 2018 midterm election may have been a har-

binger of things to come, with its record-setting turnout.

But along with a likelihood of increased voter engagement, there are worries about election security. In a Gallup poll earlier this year, nearly three in five Americans said they don't have confidence in our elections. The reasons range from Russian interference to mail-in ballot legitimacy to equipment glitches.

Recently, more than 10 percent of Americans told the Boston Herald that they are not prepared to accept the outcome of the election if their candidate loses, whether the winner is President Donald Trump or former Vice President Joe Biden. So, if turnout projections are right, as many as 15 million of our fellow citizens could emerge from Election Day feeling disenfranchised.

Meanwhile, there are

also concerns about a peaceful transfer of power, especially if Biden wins. During the vice-presidential debate, Mike Pence evaded a question about whether the Trump administration will honor this sacred tradition.

I'm looking for a different kind of assurance: a solemn pledge to rebuild trust, in our institutions and in each other. It's trust that is really at stake in this election.

With trust flagging, the brink that we face feels more immediate and dangerous. It's weakened our country's resilience and undermined our well-being.

The loss of trust has also given rise to a disturbing phenomenon: the apparent acceptability of hating a person — not just their ideas.

I can remember a time when politics was considered one of three taboo topics, never to be spoken

about in public (religion and money were the other two). Aided by social media and emboldened by anonymity, we now say everything that's on our minds, however inappropriate or incendiary.

But more than just hurtful words, Americans are seeing too many instances of hatred manifesting itself in violence.

On July 19, Daniel Salas opened the door of his New Jersey home to accept a delivery. He was shot and killed by the delivery driver, Roy Den Hollander, whose intended target was Judge Esther Salas, Daniel's mother.

Den Hollander, an avowed anti-feminist, hated Salas because she was a woman and a Latina, who in her own words, "had the nerve to become a judge." (Den Hollander, a lawyer, had appeared before Salas a year prior to the incident.) In Michigan, anger over

COVID-19 restrictions — thought to be in violation of the Constitution — has devolved into hatred for the governor, Gretchen Whitmer. Just recently, the FBI foiled a plot to kidnap the governor from her vacation home ahead of the presidential election.

According to the FBI, those involved in the conspiracy met repeatedly for firearms training and combat drills.

Their plan was to destroy Whitmer's home and take her to a secure location in Wisconsin for a "trial." We know what the sentence would have been after a guilty verdict: death.

Dr. Rachel Kleinfeld, a senior fellow at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, worries that our fading resilience is causing society to break. And no one is doing anything about it.

In a recent op-ed for The Washington Post, Kleinfeld

writes, "Partisans who would never commit violence are transforming from bystanders to apologists, making excuses for the 'excesses' of their side while pointing fingers across the aisle." Moderates are silent because they fear for their jobs, social standing or lives.

Americans have put up with enough of this madness. Whether we awaken on Nov. 4 to a President Trump or a President-Elect Biden, the polarization and hatred and violence in this country must end. Full stop.

After all, this is the United States of America. And it's only with a united population that we can back away from the brink.

Dinkin is president of the National Conflict Resolution Center, a San Diego-based group working to create solutions to challenging issues, including intolerance and incivility. To learn about NCR's programming, visit ncrconline.com

## SAN DIEGO OASIS HOSTS ANNUAL TECH FAIR

BY LAUREN J. MAPP

Older adults can learn more about technology during the free San Diego Oasis virtual tech fair this week.

The eighth annual tech fair will be held over the Zoom video chat platform.

This year's event will be over four days from Tues-

day to Friday. Each day will focus on a different subcategory of technology, which includes every day tech, healthcare, smart home devices and online security.

Qualcomm founder Irwin Jacobs will open the first day of the fair by discussing how he started his company after turning 50, said Simona

Valanciute, Oasis president and CEO.

To register for the free tech, view the full schedule of events or find out more about San Diego Oasis, visit www.SanDiegoOasis.org or call (619) 881-6262.

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## Campaign contributions for congressional candidates

Donations raised and cash on hand for San Diego County candidates.

District		Amount raised*	Cash on hand
49	Mike Levin (D)	\$618,495	\$1,840,266
	Brian Maryott (R)	\$525,420	\$221,741
50	Ammar Campa-Najjar (D)	\$1,763,409	\$1,225,077
	Darrell Issa (R)	\$2,882,902	\$1,272,780
51	Juan Vargas (D)	\$108,263	\$136,499
	Juan Hidalgo (R)	\$21,487	\$9,522
52	Scott Peters (D)	\$243,701	\$2,011,417
	Jim DeBello (R)	\$87,806	\$107,024
53	Sara Jacobs (D)	\$1,729,358	\$376,829
	Georgette Gómez (D)	\$375,679	\$256,434

\*Amount raised/total receipts. July 1, 2020 through Sept. 30, 2020.

Source: Federal Election Commission

MICHELLE GILCHRIST U-T

## MAYOR

FROM B1

these leaders' endorsements are important indications that they have diverse appeal among voters.

"These are folks who are not only leaders but doers," Gloria said Friday. "They have been on the front lines of bringing change, not only throughout San Diego but in the southeast. I hope their support is indicative that I can help them continue on that progress."

Bry, who is nearly tied with Gloria in the polls, said every vote will be important.

"I'm very honored to have a diverse group of support," she said, "residents all over the city in many different neighborhoods who are very committed to working with me to fix City Hall, to make it accountable and transparent."

Bry and Gloria are both Democrats and have similar views on many issues. But some Black community leaders said they were honing in on the candidates' different ideas about housing, homelessness and transportation.

Harris, who founded the People's Alliance for Justice, said Bry's stance on housing density is one of several reasons he personally is supporting her. The Alliance is not endorsing a candidate.

Harris said he doesn't believe residents in southeastern San Diego and other predominantly minority neighborhoods should be pushed aside at the expense of affordable housing. He said Bry's focus on encouraging higher density near public transportation would allow the city to create more housing while ensuring communities are preserved. Harris said also he believes Bry will push the county for more resources and assistance for homelessness.

"We need a mayor who will challenge the county, who won't just build affordable housing but will make

sure mental health and other services are available to the population," Harris said.

Harris also pointed to Bry's early support for a ballot measure that would establish an independent commission to investigate officer-involved deaths and misconduct. St. Julian, an attorney and author of the "Commission on Police Practices" charter amendment, also has endorsed Bry for supporting the amendment.

But Aziz said she disagrees with Bry's support for maintaining the Police Department's budget. Aziz said advocates calling for defunding police want that money reallocated to communities, people in-need and evidence-based programs.

To address homelessness, Aziz said, she supports Gloria's focus on a "housing first" model, which prioritizes placing people in housing before steering them toward services, including drug or alcohol treatment.

"The housing first model has not been given the resources it needs to show how it can truly work in San Diego," Aziz said.

She said Gloria has always supported issues that concern the Black community and has worked at providing equity for all residents. Community leaders Tracy Morris and Barry Pollard also pointed to Gloria's year-round interaction with residents in southeastern San Diego, saying he understands their issues.

"It's about a person who understands the needs of the community, Black folks, and talks to an assortment of Black people," Aziz said.

King, who runs mentoring programs, said he supports Gloria's approach to social justice, racial equity and his focus on bridging the gap between police and community. "He is the change that San Diego needs in government," King said. "I don't

see that with his competition."

Abdur-Rahim Hameed is president and CEO of the National Black Contractors Association, which is neutral, but he said he is endorsing Bry as an individual. He said he admires Bry's business experience — she founded ProFlowers.com and ran other companies — and he appreciates her support of equal access to financial opportunity.

He said he could not support Gloria because of the candidate's support for project labor agreements, which give priority to unionized workers.

Endorsements by Black community leaders are significant in this race, Hameed said, as it was when Mayor Kevin Faulconer ran for office and enjoyed the endorsement of a coalition of Black clergy and community leaders.

This time, however, "the Black community is split on its decision," Hameed said.

Williamson — who ran against Bry and Gloria in the primary — said she, too, is split and is struggling to decide whom to support. She said she feels Bry and Gloria already have caused harm to the communities she loves and that Gloria is influenced by special interests and Bry doesn't understand her community's issues with police brutality.

Bry said many who have endorsed her have known her during various chapters in her life, and she has taken the time to meet with community members to learn about neighborhood issues all over the city.

Gloria said the diversity of his support demonstrates that he can unify San Diego.

Bry and Gloria were in a dead heat in a recent San Diego Union-Tribune/10News SurveyUSA poll. Gloria leading Bry by 1 percentage point, with a quarter of likely voters still undecided.

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## 50TH • Tight race forecast in final weeks

FROM B1

Jack Pitney, professor of political science at Claremont McKenna College, said the fundraising gap is not surprising.

"It is a Republican-leaning district, and Issa has an extensive fundraising network from his years of service and has money in his own pocket," Pitney said.

The race should remain competitive, with Election Day less than three weeks away, he added.

"Democrats have a lot of money sloshing around, and I wouldn't be surprised if there is some outside Democratic money that comes into the district," he said. "In a normal situation, you have to rate Issa as a heavy favorite, but it's an unusual year and with a blue tidal wave potentially in California, I certainly wouldn't count Campa-Najjar out."

Carl Luna, professor of political science at San Diego Mesa College, said he was more surprised Issa "wasn't running up the score more," given the businessman was formerly an entrenched, longtime incumbent.

"It is an expected bad omen for Campa-Najjar, because the district has a long history of funneling money to Republican candidates, and Democrats are relatively new to trying to make it a district that is in play," Luna said. "This is how you build a base in which you can grab the district in the next

"We've been playing catch-up ever since the president encouraged me to run," Issa said.

Darrell Issa

two cycles though. ... The bottom line is, the entire county is now in play for Democrats."

The fundraising totals generated by Issa and Campa-Najjar were two of the highest fundraising figures of any congressional candidate in San Diego County and serve as a reminder that this contest is far from over.

During the third quarter, Issa's campaign led the way in spending, dropping more than \$2.1 million mostly on direct mail, media buys and fundraising services.

Issa said Friday that he knew his campaign had to pick up ground on fundraising during the third quarter while recovering from his brutal primary fight with fellow Republican Carl DeMaio.

He added that DeMaio and Campa-Najjar had entered the race before Issa declared his candidacy and had a long head start on fundraising.

"When I flew back on Air Force One, I had no money in the bank, and I knew it was going to take a while to get our fundraising systems up and running."

He said the campaign now has received contributions from more than 250,000 individuals, with the average donor giving less than \$60.

Campa-Najjar's campaign was not shy about dropping funds either. His campaign spent more than \$1.4 million during the quarter mostly on media buys, fundraising services and direct mail.

Campa-Najjar said Friday his campaign was mainly funded by small donors, with an average donation of under \$25.

"I'm proud of the extraordinary grassroots support we've received as we fight to bring an independent voice to Washington," he said.

County officials said registered voters should have received a mail ballot by now, but if not, they should contact the county registrar's office.

The last day to register to vote is Monday, although unregistered voters can file provisional ballots on Election Day, Nov. 3.

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## SMOLENS

FROM B1

Barack Obama, Hillary Clinton and the Clinton Foundation. He also equivocated about whether he would vote for Democratic presidential nominee Joe Biden, even though Campa-Najjar last month promoted the endorsement he received from the former vice president.

Some Democratic activists, who earlier had criticized Campa-Najjar for shifting positions, were incensed.

Campa-Najjar later backed away from many of his statements and said he "messed up bad" by appearing with Defend East County. He added he was aware of some of the group's conspiracy theories but not its views about violence toward protesters, both of which were prominent in the Dyer story on the front page of the U-T in August.

In his interview, Issa told Haskins that citizen groups

have a right to protect their communities with weapons.

"A militia in fact is a personal right under the Second Amendment and your right to defend your community and to take charge, if your government fails you, or to take arms if your government turns on you; those are your original constitutional rights," Issa said, according to an article by Charles T. Clark of the U-T.

That's wrong, according to Mary B. McCord, who served as acting assistant attorney general for national security at the end of Obama's second presidential term.

"Although these vigilante groups often cite the Second Amendment's mention of a 'well regulated militia' as their authority, history and Supreme Court precedent make clear that the phrase was not intended to — and does not — authorize private militias outside of government control," she wrote in the N.Y. Times.

"Indeed, these armed groups have no authority to

call themselves forth into militia service; the Second Amendment does not protect such activity; and all 50 states prohibit it."

In Georgia, appointed U.S. Sen. Kelly Loeffler and her chief Republican opponent, Rep. Doug Collins, sought the endorsement of congressional candidate Marjorie Taylor Greene, a Republican who has spread QAnon conspiracy theories and posted racist and xenophobic videos on social media, according to the Atlanta Journal-Constitution.

In September, Greene posted a photo of herself holding what appeared to be an assault rifle next to the images of Democratic Reps. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, Ilhan Omar and Rashida Tlaib. "We need strong conservative Christians to go on the offense against these socialists who want to rip our country apart," she wrote.

Republicans from President Donald Trump on down have accused Democrats of, among other

things, being quick to condemn police actions during peaceful social justice protests, while reluctant to speak out against violence by some demonstrators.

On Thursday, Greene endorsed Loeffler. The incumbent is counting on Greene's backing to boost her past Collins in the Nov. 3 special election and into a likely runoff in January with Raphael Warnock, the leading Democrat.

Eighty-one candidates who adhere — to some degree — to QAnon conspiracies ran for House and Senate seats and 24 will be on the November ballot, according to Alex Kaplan of Media Matters. He said 22 of the remaining candidates are Republicans and two are independents.

Most are in heavily Democratic districts and likely to lose. Greene is among the exceptions; her Democratic opponent withdrew from the race and she is virtually assured of winning a seat in the House.

One of QAnon's main

beliefs is that Trump is fighting a military-backed holy war against a secretive ring of satanic elites who sexually exploit children, and sometimes eat them, while being protected by a "deep state" global bureaucracy, according to a story by Kristina Davis and Joshua Emerson Smith of the U-T.

Hollywood A-listers and Democrats are seen as the villains in the baseless conspiracy theory. The FBI in Phoenix last year characterized QAnon theories as a domestic terror threat after linking them with violence.

Trump has said he knows little about the group, and did so again Thursday night during a town hall-style meeting broadcast by NBC.

"I know nothing about QAnon. ... I do know they are very much against pedophilia. They fight it very hard," he said.

Asked by host Savannah Guthrie to condemn the group, Trump declined. Yet, he has repeatedly spread QAnon's ideas online.

Last week, Trump took to Twitter to retweet the QAnon conspiracy theory that Osama bin Laden was not killed in Pakistan by SEAL Team Six in 2011 — instead, a body double was the victim — and he could still be alive. The claim goes further: that President Barack Obama and Vice President Biden had the SEALs killed to cover it up.

A former SEAL who has said he killed bin Laden, Robert O'Neill, is very much alive. He quickly went public to knock down the notion that bin Laden's death was a hoax — and criticized the president, who is spreading a rumor by a group now linked with terrorism.

### Tweet of the Week

Goes to SFGate (@SFGate), lest we forget... "U.S. climate officials say there's nearly a two-to-one chance that 2020 will end up as the globe's hottest year on record."

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